

**IMAAN & ITS ESSENTIALS**  
**JAMEA PUBLICATION NO.6**

# FOREWORD

A reflection upon the enriched history and teachings of Islam portrays it's true worth ; This is when appreciation of the strenuous and unfaltering efforts of the many personages can be witnessed. For this very purpose, pursuance of authentic Islamic literature is a dire necessity.

Over the centuries this universal religion which was conveyed in 'Arabic' to mankind has been translated to many a language to cater for the 'Non-Arabs'. Similarly the need has arisen in this contemporary age for it to be translated in our younger generation's mother tongue 'English'.

Therefore, under the instruction and guidance of our spiritual mentor *Hadhrat Moulana Yusuf Motala* (May Allah Ta'aalaa grant him a long life. Ameen) students of *Jamea Tul Imam Muhammad Zakaria (R.A)* have put their share of humble efforts together in compiling these publications which we hope will benefit generations to come.

May Allah the Almighty accept the efforts of all who have assisted in producing these publications and may He grant us all salvation in the Hereafter.

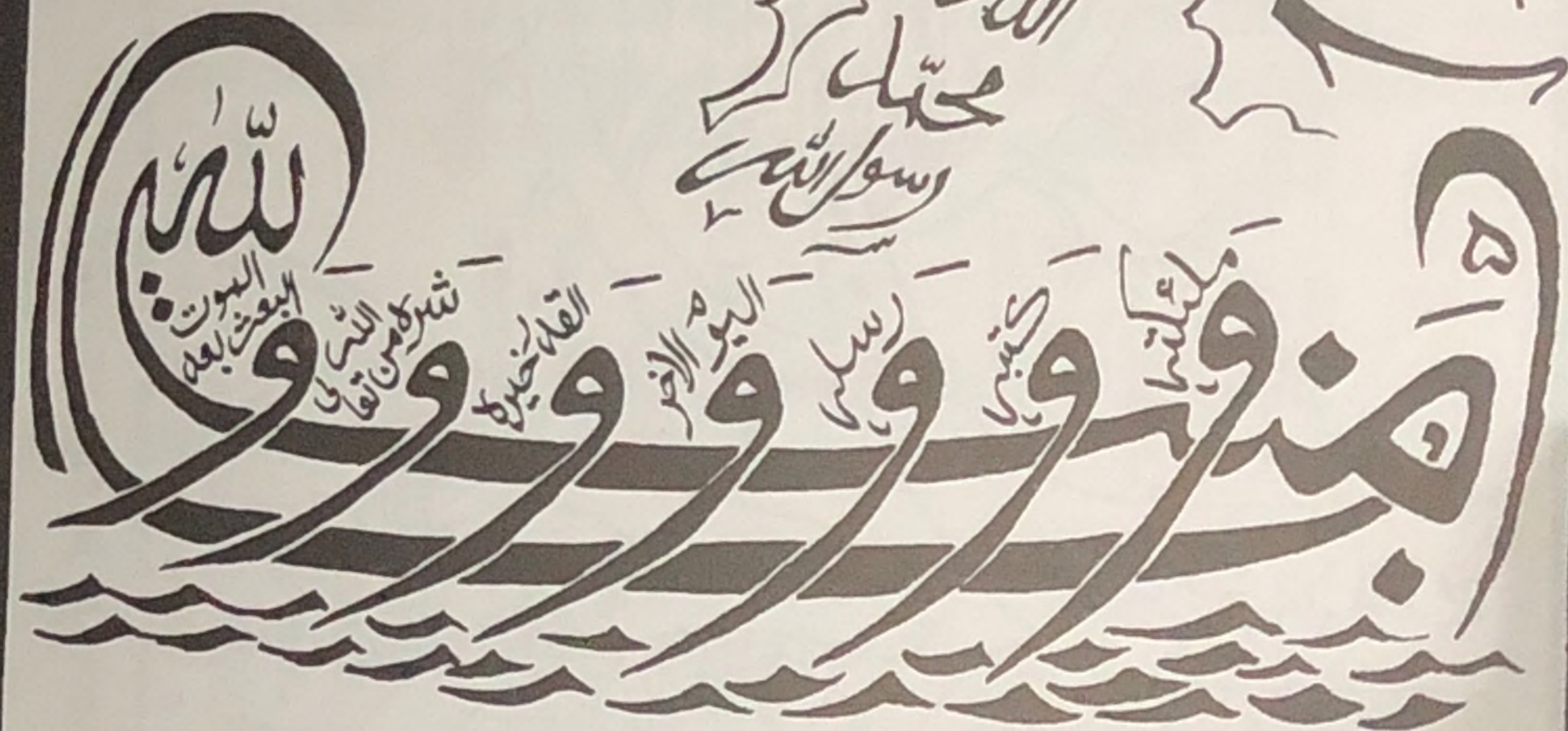
*Ameen.*

Safar 1419 - June 1998

Ismail Raja

# CONTENTS

- 3 FAITH
- 4 DEFINITION OF IMAAN AND ISLAM
- 5 ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF IMAAN
- 6 TO AFFIRM FAITH IN ALLAH TA'AALAA
- 7 TO AFFIRM FAITH IN ALLAH TA'AALAA'S ANGELS
- 9 TO AFFIRM FAITH IN HIS DIVINE BOOKS
- 11 TO AFFIRM FAITH IN THE MESSENGERS OF ALLAH
- 13 TO AFFIRM FAITH IN THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT AND RESURRECTION
- 17 TO AFFIRM FAITH IN THE PREDETERMINATION OF FAITH
- 19 A QUESTION OF FAITH
- 25 CAUTION



I affirm my faith in Allah  
His Angels, His books, His  
Messengers, The Day of Judgement,  
in that the fate (good and bad)  
is predetermined by Allah  
and in coming to life  
after death.

FAITH

As individuals our views upon what Imaan actually is or its actual encounter will vary widely.

Personally, I feel Imaan is constituted by a vast number of articles, one of which is encountered within daily supplication.

The following poem symbolizes a humble encounterance of faith :

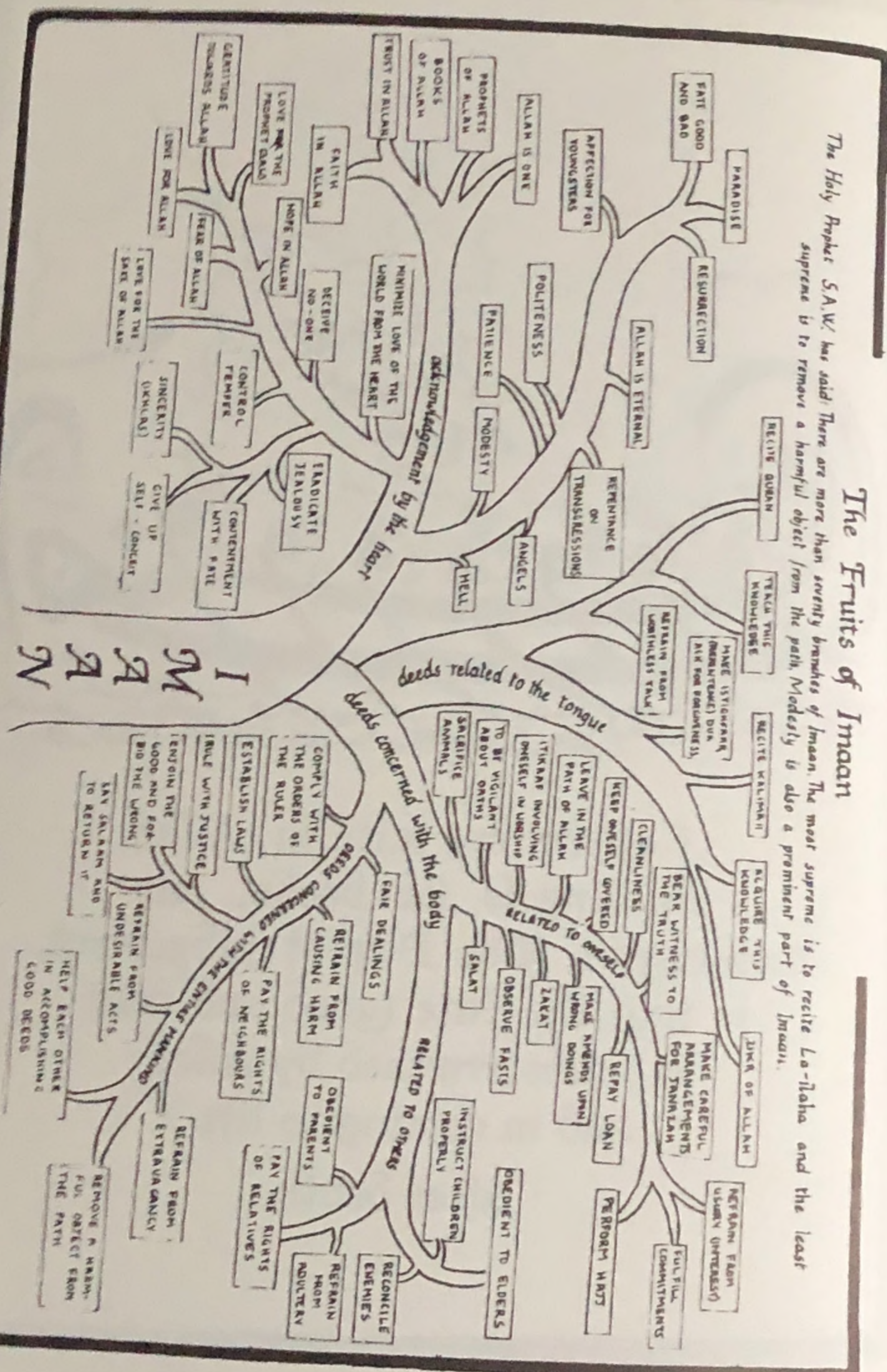
*Fearful, I seek my Creator.*

*A midst the innermost depths of prayer,*

*Inward yearning, piercing, raging, soaring hurt emerges.*

*Timid, yet easily born hopes of starting anew  
surface.*

Harmoniously , fearlessly I draw my prayers to  
an end.....



## DEFINITION OF IMAAN:

'Acceptance in a belief which can be physically attested for yet can be recognized and fully acknowledged.' According to the shariah, Imaan is the acceptance and belief in Allah, in all His attributes and all He has ordained, in the Angels, Divine Books, Prophets, The Day of Judgement, Resurrection, and Fate.

## DEFINITION OF ISLAM:

Islam is derived from 'Salm' (Surrender). This is in accordance to the act of surrendering to the will of Allah and acting upon the laws of the Shariah in accordance to the preaching of the Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMAAN AND ISLAM :

The similtude of Imaan and Islam is given by a Muhaddith as the bursting of faith in the heart and into the various parts of the body consequently the actions which the various parts carry out are termed as 'Islam'. The effect, this then has upon the heart is the direct blossoming of Imaan.

Hadhrat Umar (R.A.) narrates that as usual companions of the Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam were gathered in his company, when all of a sudden a stranger proceeded towards us and joined our circle. He then questioned our Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam, O Messenger of Allah ! What is Islam ?

The Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam replied, "Islam is to bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam is His servant, to observe the daily five prayers, to give Zakaat, to fast in the month of Ramadhaan, and lastly to perform Hajj."

To this the stranger replied, "You have spoken the truth".

Hadhrat Umar (R.A.) states that upon hearing this the Companions were surprised by the stranger's questioning and verification. He then asked about Imaan. Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam said, "Imaan means to have faith in Allah, His Angels, His divine books, the Day of Judgement, resurrection, and to believe that all good and bad is from Allah."

Once again the stranger said, "You have spoken the truth".

Finally when the stranger left, Umar (R.A.) states that the Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam then asked me, "O Umar ! do you know who the stranger was ?"

I replied, "Allah and his Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam knows best".

The Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam revealed, "It was Jibra'eel (A.S.), the purpose of his visit was to teach you your religion." (Part narration - Mishkaat).

In another Hadith, Imaan is likened to a tree. Firm belief as the root of Imaan which then branches into the fruits of Islam. Islam is the essential compliment of Imaan, for without Islam and only Imaan one is unable to illuminate his belief practically.

Hadhrat Sufyaan (R.A) narrates that once in the presence of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam he requested, "O Prophet of Allah ! Teach me such concerning Islam so that in your absence I have no need to request another."

The Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam replied, "Testify with your heart and tongue that you place Imaan on Allah and then stay steadfast upon this testimony." (Muslim)

Lets hope, my dear readers our roots are strong (i.e. Imaan) and as a result, our tree will grow and rear prosperous fruits (Islam) so that many people will have the opportunity to taste its sweetness and so endure a worthy life in this world and the Hereafter. (Aameen.)

## ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF IMAAN.

The very practices and actions of man are direct recipients of a network of thought. Within this network of thought is the dominance of core fundamental thoughts which are responsible for the entire thinking system of man. These core fundamentals are in actual fact, the core fundamentals which constitute Imaan. Therefore, without such fundamentals, Imaan cannot be secured.

**What are these fundamentals?** Study the following verses:

*'O ye who believe ! Believe in Allah and His messenger and the scriptures which He hath revealed unto His messenger and the scripture He revealed afore time. Who so disbelieveth in Allah and His Angels and His*

## DEFINITION OF IMAAN:

'Acceptance in a belief which can be physically attested for yet can be recognized and fully acknowledged.' According to the shariah, Imaan is the acceptance and belief in Allah, in all His attributes and all He has ordained, in the Angels, Divine Books, Prophets, The Day of Judgement, Resurrection, and Fate.

## DEFINITION OF ISLAM:

Islam is derived from 'Salm' (Surrender). This is in accordance to the act of surrendering to the will of Allah and acting upon the laws of the Shariah in accordance to the preaching of the Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMAAN AND ISLAM :

The similtude of Imaan and Islam is given by a Muhaddith as the bursting of faith in the heart and into the various parts of the body consequently the actions which the various parts carry out are termed as 'Islam'. The effect, this then has upon the heart is the direct blossoming of Imaan.

Hadhrat Umar (R.A.) narrates that as usual companions of the Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam were gathered in his company, when all of a sudden a stranger proceeded towards us and joined our circle. He then questioned our Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam, O Messenger of Allah ! What is Islam ?

The Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam replied, "Islam is to bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam is His servant, to observe the daily five prayers, to give Zakaat, to fast in the month of Ramadhaan, and lastly to perform Hajj."

To this the stranger replied, "You have spoken the truth".

Hadhrat Umar (R.A.) states that upon hearing this the Companions were surprised by the stranger's questioning and verification. He then asked about Imaan. Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam said, "Imaan means to have faith in Allah, His Angels, His divine books, the Day of Judgement, resurrection, and to believe that all good and bad is from Allah."

Once again the stranger said, "You have spoken the truth".

Finally when the stranger left, Umar (R.A.) states that the Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam then asked me, "O Umar ! do you know who the stranger was ?"

I replied, "Allah and his Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam knows best". The Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam revealed, "It was Jibra'eel (A.S.), the purpose of his visit was to teach you your religion." (Part narration - Mishkaat).

In another Hadith, Imaan is likened to a tree. Firm belief as the root of Imaan which then branches into the fruits of Islam. Islam is the essential compliment of Imaan, for without Islam and only Imaan one is unable to illuminate his belief practically.

Hadhrat Sufyaan (R.A) narrates that once in the presence of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam he requested, "O Prophet of Allah ! Teach me such concerning Islam so that in your absence I have no need to request another."

The Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam replied, "Testify with your heart and tongue that you place Imaan on Allah and then stay steadfast upon this testimony." (Muslim)

Lets hope, my dear readers our roots are strong (i.e. Imaan) and as a result, our tree will grow and rear prosperous fruits (Islam) so that many people will have the opportunity to taste its sweetness and so endure a worthy life in this world and the Hereafter. (Aameen.)

## ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF IMAAN.

The very practices and actions of man are direct recipients of a network of thought. Within this network of thought is the dominance of core fundamental thoughts which are responsible for the entire thinking system of man. These core fundamentals are in actual fact, the core fundamentals which constitute Imaan. Therefore, without such fundamentals, Imaan cannot be secured.

**What are these fundamentals?** Study the following verses:

*'O ye who believe ! Believe in Allah and His messenger and the scriptures which He hath revealed unto His messenger and the scripture He revealed afore time. Who so disbelieveth in Allah and His Angels and His*

*scriptures and His messengers and the Last Day, he verily hath wandered far astray.* (Al-Nisah, aayah 136).

*'Nought of disaster befalleth in the earth or in yourselves but it is in a book We bring it into being - Lo! that is easy for Allah - that ye grieve not for the sake of that which hath escaped you, nor yet exalt because of that which hath been given. Allah loveth not all prideful boasters'* (57:22-23).

Reflecting upon the above quoted Qur'anic verses it can be acknowledged by verse one that faith in Allah, His Angels, His messengers, His scriptures and the Last Day have been unified in one verse. However to affirm faith in the predetermination of fate (good/bad) is quoted external to verse one in an individual verse. Although fate has been individualised it has been repetitively highlighted in the Holy Qur'an and so it is considered as a creed amongst the other five mentioned. Each fundamental is vital to the other resulting in the believer. Each can be seen as an essential ingredient of Imaan, without which Imaan is under nourished.

## 1. TO AFFIRM FAITH IN ALLAH TA'AALAA

Imagine two drivers steering the same car, two lecturers conveying the same lecture or writing upon one blackboard. Exactly how efficient the affairs would be, is easily visualized. The navigatory skills of one driver will never level with another; the vocal capacity of one lecturer will never compensate for another lecturer's vocals. Hence, the resulting scenarios would be pictures of bombardment of one's ideals governing freedom of space. Similarly, had there been more than one Creator there would have been conflict and chaos.

The sun, moon and the galaxy do not give rise to chaos as there is complete co-operation and harmony within the system. This flawless system is so because each component has a common origin, purpose and most importantly a sole Absolute Creator.

In the stillness of a cool night's air, minute illuminations are withheld above in the absolute darkness of nightfall as sequins upon a royal blue garment of elegance, the stillness of beautified branches, tranquilize the onlooker, surely then there must come a moment within such bliss when such obviously superb and perfectly com-

binning order and beauty is a clear proof of the presence of an All wise and All powerful Creator - **'Allah Ta'aala, The most Glorified'**.

It has been stated in the Qur'an, *"Allah! there is no God save Him, the Living, the Sustainer"* (Al-Imran 2).

Disbelief in Allah Ta'aalaa and assigning partners to Allah Ta'aalaa is Kufr (acts of a disbeliever), as it is stated in the Qur'an; *"Allah forgiveth not (the sin of) joining other Gods with Him, but, He forgiveth whom he pleaseth, sins other than this."* (4:48)

Within the declaration of faith upon Allah Ta'aalaa the three most significant factors are: 1) affirm faith in the actual being of Allah Ta'aalaa 2) the oneness of the Almighty and 3) to attribute to Him all good qualities and to believe that He is pure from all faults. By affirming faith in Allah Ta'aalaa, one is then able to orientate life around the acquisition of the Almighty Allah Ta'aalaa's happiness and worship.

The existence of Allah Ta'aalaa has its proof in every living aspect, most of all in our own very lives.

When a villager was asked about the actual being of the Almighty, he replied, *'The excretion of a camel confirms that a camel has passed in a particular direction, The imprints of a mans footsteps confirm the direction taken by a walking man. So, how can the sky holding a mansion of stars and the earth containing extensive passages, not be proof enough of Allah Ta'aalaa the All-knower?'*

The Almighty has undoubtedly bestowed us with the priceless gift of Imaan. Our gratitude could never extend to the limits of the Almighty, however, *'Those without knowledge say; "Why doesn't God speak to us, why can't one have a sign? But the signs are clear to any people who hold firmly to faith in their hearts.'* (Surah 2:118).

## 2. TO AFFIRM FAITH IN ALLAH TA'AALAA'S ANGELS

Supposing the universe is likened to a machine, the angels are thus the forceful activators of the engine and all its components, who are faithfully working in ac-

*scriptures and His messengers and the Last Day, he verily hath wandered far astray.* (Al-Nisah, aayah 136).

*'Nought of disaster befallerh in the earth or in yourselves but it is in a book We bring it into being - Lo! that is easy for Allah - that ye grieve not for the sake of that which hath escaped you, nor yet exalt because of that which hath been given. Allah loveth not all prideful boasters'.* (57:22-23).

Reflecting upon the above quoted Qur'anic verses it can be acknowledged by verse one that faith in Allah, His Angels, His messengers, His scriptures and the Last Day have been unified in one verse. However to affirm faith in the predetermination of fate (good/bad) is quoted external to verse one in an individual verse. Although fate has been individualised it has been repetitively highlighted in the Holy Qur'an and so it is considered as a creed amongst the other five mentioned. Each fundamental is vital to the other resulting in the believer. Each can be seen as an essential ingredient of Imaan, without which Imaan is under nourished.

## 1. TO AFFIRM FAITH IN ALLAH TA'AALAA

Imagine two drivers steering the same car, two lecturers conveying the same lecture or writing upon one blackboard. Exactly how efficient the affairs would be, is easily visualized. The navigatory skills of one driver will never level with another; the vocal capacity of one lecturer will never compensate for another lecturer's vocals. Hence, the resulting scenarios would be pictures of bombardment of one's ideals governing freedom of space. Similarly, had there been more than one Creator there would have been conflict and chaos.

The sun, moon and the galaxy do not give rise to chaos as there is complete co-operation and harmony within the system. This flawless system is so because each component has a common origin, purpose and most importantly a sole Absolute Creator.

In the stillness of a cool night's air, minute illuminations are withheld above in the absolute darkness of nightfall as sequins upon a royal blue garment of elegance, the stillness of beautified branches, tranquilize the onlooker, surely then there must come a moment within such bliss when such obviously superb and perfectly com-

bining order and beauty is a clear proof of the presence of an All wise and All powerful Creator - **'Allah Ta'aala, The most Glorified'**.

It has been stated in the Qur'an, **"Allah! there is no God save Him, the Living, the Sustainer"** (Al-Imran 2).

Disbelief in Allah Ta'aalaa and assigning partners to Allah Ta'aalaa is Kufr (acts of a disbeliever), as it is stated in the Qur'an; **"Allah forgiveth not (the sin of) joining other Gods with Him, but, He forgiveth whom he pleaseth, sins other than this."** (4:48)

Within the declaration of faith upon Allah Ta'aalaa the three most significant factors are: 1) affirm faith in the actual being of Allah Ta'aalaa 2) the oneness of the Almighty and 3) to attribute to Him all good qualities and to believe that He is pure from all faults. By affirming faith in Allah Ta'aalaa, one is then able to orientate life around the acquisition of the Almighty Allah Ta'aalaa's happiness and worship.

The existence of Allah Ta'aalaa has its proof in every living aspect, most of all in our own very lives.

When a villager was asked about the actual being of the Almighty, he replied, **'The excretion of a camel confirms that a camel has passed in a particular direction, The imprints of a mans footsteps confirm the direction taken by a walking man. So, how can the sky holding a mansion of stars and the earth containing extensive passages, not be proof enough of Allah Ta'aalaa the All-knower?'**

The Almighty has undoubtedly bestowed us with the priceless gift of Imaan. Our gratitude could never extend to the limits of the Almighty, however, **'Those without knowledge say; "Why doesn't God speak to us, why can't one have a sign? But the signs are clear to any people who hold firmly to faith in their hearts.'** (Surah 2:118).

## 2. TO AFFIRM FAITH IN ALLAH TA'AALAA'S ANGELS

Supposing the universe is likened to a machine, the angels are thus the forceful activators of the engine and all its components, who are faithfully working in ac-

cordance to the Almighty Allah's ordained rules of superiority. Their presence upon this world thus establishes and maintains the vital link between the most Glorified and mankind.

Within the vast number of worldly religions, even those of the Greek, and Egyptian philosophers, the existence of such beings i.e., angels has been readily accepted. However, the Sabaeans (star worshippers) believe that such beings are either formations physically characteristic of stars or wanderers.

The Greek and Egyptian philosophers and the supreme of philosophers have named such beings, the '10 intellects.' The fireworshippers have named the angels, 'Amshasipand'. The angels have adopted the names of the Hindu Gods within Hinduism. The Jewish have named the angels, 'Wabeem', from amongst these the prominence bearing angels have been named, 'Jibraeel' and 'Michaael' etc. These names have also been adopted by the Christians as well as naming them 'The Holy Spirit'. The illiterate Arabs recognized the angels as 'The Daughters of Allah' (God Forbid). Reflecting upon the differences between the adopted names, they are in essence various adoptions of one fundamental. Within the above mentioned classes of worshippers, the beliefs governing the rank of the angels fluctuated between the angels being a part of mankind or that they were Godly.

### *Within Islam what are the beliefs concerning Angels ?*

The Holy Qur'an highlights the beliefs concerning the angels. We learn that the angels are not a creation of material form but, that of Noor (Divine Light). The Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam saw to the abolishment of the false beliefs held by mankind, concerning the angels. In particular he established the proclamation that the angel is another of God's creations, teaching that the angel is in no way Godly, but merely assigned to the worship of the Almighty.

### *Why is it thus important to affirm faith in the Angels ?*

There are two reasons for its importance:

- 1). The idol worshippers and other religious worshippers used to believe that angels were Godly. This belief however should be replaced by reinforcing that the angels are in actual fact dependant and subject to the orders of God which elimi-

nates this misplaced belief of the Godliness of angels. If this is not accepted then the 'Kalimah Tawhid' becomes distorted in its meaning which is the foundation and initial point of faith.

- 2). The materialistic of mankind is aided through affirming faith in the non-material i.e., angels, hence his materialism is confronted as is a rival. To affirm faith in Allah Ta'aalaa's angels has been proclaimed before that of the Prophets (salutations upon all). It could then be questioned, why it is that the angels have been given priority over the Prophets (salutations upon all)? The element of priority is such as it is through the angels that the link between Allah Ta'aalaa and the Prophets (salutations upon all) has always been maintained. The following Qur'anic verses reinforce the importance and creation of the angels:

*'Who is an enemy to Allah, and His angels and His messengers, and Gabriel and Michael ! Then Lo ! Allah (Himself) is an enemy to the disbelievers.'* (Surah 2 : 98).

*'Praise be to Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, which appointeth the angels as messengers having wings two, three and four. He multiplieth in certain what He will. Lo ! Allah is able to do all things.'* (Surah 35 : 1)

## **3. TO AFFIRM FAITH IN HIS DIVINE BOOKS**

*'O people of the Book, you have no ground to stand on unless you stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from God.'* (Surah 5:68)

Reflecting upon the above Qur'anic verse we should learn that our lives can be classed as aimless if we resist in affirmance of the above mentioned.

Quoted from the Holy Qur'an :

*'And who believes in the revelation sent to thee and sent before thy time (and in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter'.*

The above quoted verse emphasizes the importance of the affirmance of faith in all

cordance to the Almighty Allah's ordained rules of superiority. Their presence upon this world thus establishes and maintains the vital link between the most Glorified and mankind.

Within the vast number of worldly religions, even those of the Greek, and Egyptian philosophers, the existence of such beings i.e., angels has been readily accepted. However, the Sabaeans (star worshippers) believe that such beings are either formations physically characteristic of stars or wanderers.

The Greek and Egyptian philosophers and the supreme of philosophers have named such beings, the '10 intellects.' The fireworshippers have named the angels, 'Amshasipand'. The angels have adopted the names of the Hindu Gods within Hinduism. The Jewish have named the angels, 'Wabeem', from amongst these the prominence bearing angels have been named, 'Jibraeel' and 'Michaael' etc. These names have also been adopted by the Christians as well as naming them 'The Holy Spirit'. The illiterate Arabs recognized the angels as 'The Daughters of Allah' (God Forbid). Reflecting upon the differences between the adopted names, they are in essence various adoptions of one fundamental. Within the above mentioned classes of worshippers, the beliefs governing the rank of the angels fluctuated between the angels being a part of mankind or that they were Godly.

### *Within Islam what are the beliefs concerning Angels ?*

The Holy Qur'an highlights the beliefs concerning the angels. We learn that the angels are not a creation of material form but, that of Noor (Divine Light). The Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam saw to the abolishment of the false beliefs held by mankind, concerning the angels. In particular he established the proclamation that the angel is another of God's creations, teaching that the angel is in no way Godly, but merely assigned to the worship of the Almighty.

### *Why is it thus important to affirm faith in the Angels ?*

There are two reasons for its importance:

- 1). The idol worshippers and other religious worshippers used to believe that angels were Godly. This belief however should be replaced by reinforcing that the angels are in actual fact dependant and subject to the orders of God which elimi-

nates this misplaced belief of the Godliness of angels. If this is not accepted then the 'Kalimah Tawhid' becomes distorted in its meaning which is the foundation and initial point of faith.

- 2). The materialistic of mankind is aided through affirming faith in the non-material i.e., angels, hence his materialism is confronted as is a rival. To affirm faith in Allah Ta'aalaa's angels has been proclaimed before that of the Prophets (salutations upon all). It could then be questioned, why it is that the angels have been given priority over the Prophets (salutations upon all)? The element of priority is such as it is through the angels that the link between Allah Ta'aalaa and the Prophets (salutations upon all) has always been maintained. The following Qur'anic verses reinforce the importance and creation of the angels:

*'Who is an enemy to Allah, and His angels and His messengers, and Gabriel and Michael ! Then Lo ! Allah (Himself) is an enemy to the disbelievers.'* (Surah 2 : 98).

*'Praise be to Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, which appointeth the angels as messengers having wings two, three and four. He multiplieth in certain what He will. Lo ! Allah is able to do all things.'* (Surah 35 : 1)

## **3. TO AFFIRM FAITH IN HIS DIVINE BOOKS**

*'O people of the Book, you have no ground to stand on unless you stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from God.'* (Surah 5:68)

Reflecting upon the above Qur'anic verse we should learn that our lives can be classed as aimless if we resist in affirmance of the above mentioned.

Quoted from the Holy Qur'an :

*'And who believes in the revelation sent to thee and sent before thy time (and in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter'.*

The above quoted verse emphasizes the importance of the affirmance of faith in all

the Holy scriptures which have been revealed even prior to the Qur'an itself.

The Holy books have insured that as time continues, religion also continues to thrive, this is most definitely the beauty of much needed divine scriptures. Therefore in the absence of Prophets, such scriptures are maintained and require the believers' affirmance in the scripts so that the absolute demolition of religion will never become a threatening factor.

The scholar Sayyad Suleman Nadwi (R. A.) has written in his book, 'Seeratun Nabi' that anyone who accepted what was revealed to the Prophet of their time, and if their acts were in accordance to the revelations then they shall be entitled to enter Paradise. He also mentions that since the time of Adam (A. S.) up until the time of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam each Prophet was sent with the same religion.

As time has drawn nearer to The Day of Judgement mankind has manipulated and corrupted the divine scriptures namely the Psalms (Zaboor), Old Testament (Tawraat) and the New Testament (Injeel), demeaning and altering the original message of Allah. The manipulation by man of the Holy scriptures then gave rise for a renewed scripture's revelation. It was in this very situation that the Qur'an was revealed. Corruption however does not justify ignorance regarding such scripts as every divine book had two elements in common; each contained religion and the rules ordained upon mankind.

It has been stated in the book 'Mugaltai' that the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam was once away on a trip to Syria with his uncle Abu Talib. They stopped at a place called Taimaa. Whilst at Taimaa a Jewish Scholar named Buhaira Raahib happened to pass the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam. On seeing the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam he questioned Abu Talib as to who his companion was. Abu Talib told him that his companion was his nephew. Buhaira then asked Abu Talib, "Are you his guardian and do you wish to take care of him?" Abu Talib replied, "Yes". The Jewish scholar then said, "I swear by my Lord if you take this boy to Syria that the Jewish people of that land will take his life because he is the 'Prophet of Allah' who will put an end to the religion of the Jews." Buhaira confirmed this by proclaiming that he had studied details associated with the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam in the Tawraat (Old Testament). Upon hearing this Abu Talib feared for his nephew and so discontinued his journey to Syria, returning to Makkah. From this we learn that the scripts other

than the Qur'an were at one time valid, as they were after all originally unviolated messages from Allah Ta'aalaa.

Due to corruptions within the 3 mentioned Holy books we can no longer obey the revelations that they contain. However this does not mean for a moment that we are in the position to speak ill of them as this is merely adding insult to injuries already inflicted.

The Qur'an is unique as it is the sole divine book which carries an assurance of safeguard of the highest kind, that of the Almighty Allah's, whereby Allah has proclaimed,

**'Lo! We, even We reveal the Reminder, and lo! We verily are its Guardian.'** (Surah 15:9)

This assurance of the fact that the Holy Qur'an shall never be altered reinforces the superiority of the Qur'an and the necessity to affirm faith upon it. The Holy Qur'an is not only a safeguard but also acts as a divine scripture which vouches for all preceding scriptures. This can be acknowledged in the following:

**'And unto thee have We revealed the Scripture with the truth, confirming whatever Scripture was before it, and a watcher over it.'** (Surah 5:48)

Finally, the revelation of the Qur'an effectively resulted in a divine book which re-issued some of the original forms of all those divine books which were manipulated by man. Hence we have undoubtedly been gifted with oceans of priceless revelations, unique and absolutely flawless - how benevolent the Glorified Provider is!

#### 4. TO AFFIRM FAITH IN THE MESSENGERS OF ALLAH

Through the infinite mercy of the Almighty Allah Ta'aalaa, Prophecy has been bestowed amongst each generation of mankind as a process by which the divine revelations may be secured in the hearts of the believers. Thus to affirm faith in the messengers of Allah Ta'aalaa reached its inevitable absolute.

Before the era of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam all tribal communities believed that they were specifically honoured in the eyes of Allah Ta'aalaa and

that His watchful eye lay only upon their tribes. They also believed that prophecy would surely descend within their very tribes. Each tribe having been bestowed by a Prophet within their time believed this was the case as they were the favoured.

The Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam having acquired prophecy instantly began to enlighten and illuminate the evil ridden world. Through the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam mankind began to recognize their true Creator. The Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam clarified to the tribes that within Islam, an Arab has no priority over a non-Arab, in the same sense a white has no priority over a black nor a black over a white. It was made clear that rank was only distinguished between the tribes via good deeds, nothing more. Hence the outcome of such teachings was that such pledges were completely bygone, unifying the tribal communities.

Within other religions such as Christianity and Judaism, to affirm faith in a sole messenger and to be negligent towards all other messengers is permissible and does not effect the wholeness of the believer. However, within Islam the believer must affirm faith in all Prophets (salutations upon all) past and present. This is as compulsory as to affirm faith in Almighty Allah Ta'aalaa Himself.

Before Islam, Prophecy had many differing meanings as follows:

The Jews believed that a Prophet was a foreteller of news and all favourable and unfavourable prayers associated with the Prophets were readily accepted.

The Christians believed that their Prophet was the 'Son of God' (God forbid). It has been quoted in the Old Testament that Esaa (A.S) has said, "All those that have come before me were either thieves or bandits." On the contrary the New Testament has made no mention of Prophecy.

The Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam elaborated the realities governing Prophecy for the benefit of Mankind. Within these elaborations the most prominent bearing is that all Prophets are infallible. The absolute innocence of a Prophet is vital as a Prophet is assigned to serve as an example, thus a Prophet full of flaws could not possibly help to enlighten and reform the ills of man.

The Holy Qur'an has justified the innocence of the Prophets, e.g. The Jews believed that Suleman (A.S) was the originator of witch craft however the Qur'an

has vouched his innocence by:

*"And they (the Jews) followed that which the devils falsely related against the kingdom of Suleman. Suleman disbelieved not; but the devils disbelieved, teaching mankind magic.." (Surah 2:102).*

The exact number of messengers is unfounded. The Holy Qur'an states, "*Verily We sent messengers before thee among them those of whom We have not told thee ...*"

However a believer must affirm faith in all messengers founded and unfounded as each and every messenger has conveyed Tawhid (the Oneness of the Almighty) and all ordained rules of the Almighty Allah Ta'aalaa have been conveyed to man via Prophets (salutations upon all). By denying faith in the Prophets the disbelievers are subsequently denying the validity of the actual revelations.

As a final note it is worth remembering that whenever a Prophet is mentioned one should readily voice words of salutation, an act which is a distinction of a Muslim.

## 5. TO AFFIRM FAITH IN THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT & RESURRECTION

*'And who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammed) and that which was revealed before thee, and are certain of the Hereafter.'* (Surah 2:4)

Besides affirming faith in Allah, Aakhirah is the next predominant of aspects mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. The Arabic word 'Aakhirah' means 'Hereafter'. Aakhirah initiates at the very final breath of man.

The Hereafter consists of two phases. The first of these phases is known as 'Barzakh' - the duration of time spent from the point of death until resurrection. The second phase is known as 'Qiyaamah' which begins after resurrection and is inclusive of the eternal life then spent as ordained by Allah Ta'aalaa.

Essentially every mortal encounters the life upon this world, Barzakh, and Qiyaamah. Each one differing in the following way:

### **Life in this world :**

Mankinds body is outrightly visible whereas the soul is not. Consequently the infliction of pain is primarily absorbed by the body although through association the soul too undergoes some amount of pain.

### **Life in Barzakh :**

Mankinds soul is outrightly visible whereas the body is not. Consequently the infliction of pain and hardship is primarily absorbed by the soul although through association the body too undergoes some amount of pain.

### **Life in Qiyaamah :**

Mankind's body and soul are both outrightly visible. Consequently the infliction of pain will be absorbed and encountered by both body and soul individually.

The inevitability of the 'Day of Judgement' is or should be known by all, however our daily practises should thus be in accordance to this knowledge. At the end of a long and laborious day when one finally reflects upon the conducts of the day, why is it that on many occasions feelings of regret seep through our minds and the ugliness of guilt emerges? As mortal beings why is it that the Day of Judgement is not foremost in our minds? Aiding one in preparation for such an excruciating ordeal.

*'They of God's right hand shall ask one another in Paradise of the wretched "What has cast you into the hell fire?" "They will say "We were not of those who prayed, or those who fed the poor, and we wasted our time with empty arguments, and we rejected as a lie the Day of Reckoning - till we were forced to accept the Reality.'*  
(74:39-47)

The contrasting fate bearing destinies of mankind can be clearly acknowledged from the following Surah :

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.*

*Woe unto the defrauders :*

*Those who when they take the measure from man demand it full,  
But if they measure unto them or weigh for them, they cause them less.*

*Do such (men) not consider that they will be raised again.*

*Unto an awful Day,*

*The day when (all) mankind stand before the Lord of the Worlds ?*

*Nay but the record of the vile is the 'Sijjin'  
Ah ! what will convey unto thee what Sijjin is !  
A written record .*

*Woe unto the repudiators on that day !*

*Those who deny the Day of Judgement .*

*Which none denieth save each criminal transgressor,  
Who, when thou readest unto him our revelations, saith : (mere )  
fables of the men of old.*

*Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts.*

*Nay, but surely on that day they will be covered from  
(the mercy of) their Lord.*

*Then Lo ! they verily will burn in hell,*

*And it will be said ( unto them ) : This is that which ye used to deny.*

*Nay but the record of the righteous is in 'Iliyin' ! -*

*Ah, what will convey unto thee what Iliyin is ! -*

*A written record,*

*Attested by those who are brought near (unto their Lord).*

*Lo! the righteous verily are in delight, on couches, gazing.*

*Thou will know in their faces the radiance of delight.*

*They are given to drink of a pure wine, sealed, whose seal is Musk -*

*For this let (all) those strive who strive for bliss -*

*And mixed with water of Tasnim,*

*A spring whence those brought near to Allah drink.*

*Lo ! the guilty used to laugh at those who disbelieved ,*

*And wink one to another when they passed them,*

*And when they returned to their own folk, they returned jesting;*

*And when they saw them they said :Lo! these have gone astray*

*Yet they were not sent as guardians over them*

*This day it is those who believe who have the laugh*

*On high couches, gazing.*

*Are not the disbelievers paid for what they used to do.*

*( Surah 83:1-36 )*

Belief in 'life after death' has existed in various religions and to some degree consciously or subconsciously within mankind himself. Scientists today are actively

engaged in the combat of the disintegration of the Ozone layer. Their concerns must inevitably lie with the fear of the absolute collapse of the world, and the possibility of life after death.

'Some say "There is only this present life; we live and we die, and only time destroys us."

*In this they have no knowledge, it is merely their own conceit. God gives you life, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you again on the Day of Resurrection. There is no doubt of this - but most people have not arrived at this knowledge.'* (Surah 45 : 24)

We believe in the resurrection after death, although we have no material proof of this, for none of the dead have returned to tell us what happens to man after death. But this faith is sequel to our faith in Allah; His wisdom and justice. The mind tells us that it is not appropriate or comprehensible that the short life of man should end on this earth, and that all good should consequently cease. There must be another life in which man receives some reward as the result of his good actions in this life. Belief in life after death is the real hope of the 'good man' in this world, without which life would be like a blind alley without sense or goal.

Resurrection is a fundamental belief in Islam. Many people in the world disbelieve in 'life after death'. Different religious worshippers have believed that the inevitable outcome of death is the definite admittance of man into Heaven, or the transformation into dust, or the equally misplaced belief of resting in peace, feeling nothing.

In a Hadeeth it is narrated that a Sahaabi (R. A) once asked the Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam.

"O Prophet of Allah, how will Allah create humans the second time when their bodies will be nothing but dust, and is there any sign amongst the remaining mankind which on seeing one can take as a proof of life after death?"

The Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam replied, "Have you ever passed by your jungles or crop after a time of famine or drought? There must have been no sign of pasture there but in contrast it must have been barren land. Therefore on passing by after rain, everything surely looked green with grass." So, the Sahaabi (R. A) answered, "What you say is true." The Prophet Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam said, "Take proof of God's divine power from this of giving life to death."

As a conclusion the following Qur'anic Aayaat should be acknowledged :

*'Oh! Mankind if ye are in doubt concerning the resurrection then lo! We have created you from dust, then from a drop of seed, then from a clot, then from a little lump of flesh shapely and shapeless that We may make it clear for you. And We cause what We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed time and afterwards We bring you forth as infants then give you growth that ye attain your full strength.'*

*And among you there is he who is brought back to the most abject time of life so that after knowledge he knoweth nought. And thou Muhammed Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam seest the earth barren but when We send down water there on it doth thrill and swell and put forth every desirable kind of growth.'* (Surah 22 :5)

## 6. TO AFFIRM FAITH IN THE PREDETERMINATION OF FATE (TAQDEER)

An engineer and an both architect require a carefully devised plan which details the entire structure necessary for the resulting construction. Similarly, Allah Ta'aalaa has devised a detailed plan which will resultantly unfold into the fate of the world; in both the element of predetermination is visible.

Mankind has and will continue to argue with the complexities of a predetermined fate. The average person having spent hours upon hours delving and mentally fighting with the 'prescription of destiny' will usually come to the conclusion that if the case is that God has already decided upon our fate, then what is the use of this world and why make an effort to better one's life?

The fact is that no matter what deed a person performs, it is in accordance to the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord Almighty. In parallel to this it should also be acknowledged and accepted that the Almighty has bestowed upon every human being the power to think and He has enlightened for him the good and the bad. Each individual also has the option of choosing good from bad utilizing such intellectuality.

Efforts towards the betterment of one's life in this world is vital as we mortal beings do not know where our destination lies in the Hereafter. One's ignorance towards the final destination should then encourage one towards betterment upon this world for the ultimate goal- Heaven. As an example, for a person bearing a cancerous growth both patient and physician will do their utmost to abide by all practises which will help to eliminate or reduce the life threatening growth. Whilst this conscious effort is being made by patient and physician, the Almighty Allah has knowledge of the course of the illness and its final outcome. However, as the patient is unaware of his fate he does not weaken in his routines in hope of living a normal life. Similarly, as we do not know our final destinations in the Hereafter should we not then establish routines which will undoubtedly aid our lives in the Hereafter?

For those who remain adamant upon the belief that fate is controlled solely by man, ponder over this:

*'If you think that you control your own destinies, then try to stop your souls leaving your bodies at the time of your death!'* (Hadeeth)

Let it be that Taqdeer (Fate, good/bad) is beyond the limits of our understanding. It is such a preserved secret of the Lord that it has not even been revealed to any of the divine angels nor are its realities known by any great Prophet.

Hadhrat Ali (R.A.) when once questioned upon Taqdeer, replied, **"It is too great a path: do not walk on it."**

The person enquired a second time, and so Hadhrat Ali (R.A.) answered, **"It is a deep ocean: do not enter it."**

Upon being asked a third time Hadhrat Ali (R.A.) replied, **"It is the secret of Allah: do not ponder deep into it."**

It has been stated that the wisdom behind Taqdeer shall be opened to the creation before entering Jannah (Awjaz). Tabraani has narrated that the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam said, "When Taqdeer is mentioned, stop!" (your tongues from talking any further).

Our Imaan upon the predetermination of one's fate should thus be steadfast, as it has been stated in the Holy Qur'an:

*'If God lay the touch of trouble on you, no one can deliver you from it*

*save God alone, and if He wills good for you, no one can prevent His blessing. He confers them on His servants as He chooses.* (10: 107).

## A QUESTION OF FAITH by Muhammad Yousuf.

There are so many possible starting points to my story. My progression to Islam was not the result of any one event, but rather a succession of experiences. It is more like a spider's web heavy with dew - each droplet representing an important moment in my life, connected by a near invisible thread. As you touch one strand the whole web shudders. My coming to Islam is like that; countless interconnected moments of truth. Sometimes these moments were like a bolt of lightning instantly apparent but more often it was only after a period of reflection that I understood their significance.

There is nothing remarkable about my upbringing. God blessed me with loving parents who made many sacrifices so that I would be well educated. My Christian upbringing was thorough and although I had faith, it was not long before I had given up practising my religion. Like so many young people, the pull of society and western values distracted me from religion. It is not 'fashionable' among young people to be religious. Religion? that's for old people, those who are about to die. My faith weakened until it was something which occupied little of my time and few of my thoughts.

My faith was most shaken when I worked as a porter at Great Ormond Street Hospital for sick children. My acquaintance with one girl in particular is a tiny fragmentation within my catalogue of memories. She was a beautiful child of fourteen who had not developed since she was struck by cancer when just nine. I was taking her to a scanner with her parents, delightful people with a gorgeous, soft sense of humour. They bore her suffering better than I thought humanly possible. As I returned the partially blind, silent motionless daughter back to her bed, unknowingly, I allowed her head to slip. She made no movement which I could fathom but her parents quickly sensed her pain and at once urged me to support her head. I was so angry with my clumsiness and with this poor child's suffering that my faith was greatly shaken. I muttered my apologies devastated by the thought that I had hurt her. In this moment of distress, this half-blind dying child

Efforts towards the betterment of one's life in this world is vital as we mortal beings do not know where our destination lies in the Hereafter. One's ignorance towards the final destination should then encourage one towards betterment upon this world for the ultimate goal- Heaven. As an example, for a person bearing a cancerous growth both patient and physician will do their utmost to abide by all practises which will help to eliminate or reduce the life threatening growth. Whilst this conscious effort is being made by patient and physician, the Almighty Allah has knowledge of the course of the illness and its final outcome. However, as the patient is unaware of his fate he does not weaken in his routines in hope of living a normal life. Similarly, as we do not know our final destinations in the Hereafter should we not then establish routines which will undoubtedly aid our lives in the Hereafter?

For those who remain adamant upon the belief that fate is controlled solely by man, ponder over this:

***'If you think that you control your own destinies, then try to stop your souls leaving your bodies at the time of your death!'*** (Hadeeth)

Let it be that Taqdeer (Fate, good/bad) is beyond the limits of our understanding. It is such a preserved secret of the Lord that it has not even been revealed to any of the divine angels nor are its realities known by any great Prophet.

Hadhrat Ali (R.A.) when once questioned upon Taqdeer, replied, **"It is too great a path: do not walk on it."**

The person enquired a second time, and so Hadhrat Ali (R.A.) answered, **"It is a deep ocean: do not enter it."**

Upon being asked a third time Hadhrat Ali (R.A.) replied, **"It is the secret of Allah: do not ponder deep into it."**

It has been stated that the wisdom behind Taqdeer shall be opened to the creation before entering Jannah (Awjaz). Tabraani has narrated that the Holy Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam said, "When Taqdeer is mentioned, stop!" (your tongues from talking any further).

Our Imaan upon the predetermination of one's fate should thus be steadfast, as it has been stated in the Holy Qur'an:

***'If God lay the touch of trouble on you, no one can deliver you from it***

*save God alone, and if He wills good for you, no one can prevent His blessing. He confers them on His servants as He chooses.* (10: 107).

## **A QUESTION OF FAITH** *by Muhammad Yousuf.*

There are so many possible starting points to my story. My progression to Islam was not the result of any one event, but rather a succession of experiences. It is more like a spider's web heavy with dew - each droplet representing an important moment in my life, connected by a near invisible thread. As you touch one strand the whole web shudders. My coming to Islam is like that; countless interconnected moments of truth. Sometimes these moments were like a bolt of lightning instantly apparent but more often it was only after a period of reflection that I understood their significance.

There is nothing remarkable about my upbringing. God blessed me with loving parents who made many sacrifices so that I would be well educated. My Christian upbringing was thorough and although I had faith, it was not long before I had given up practising my religion. Like so many young people, the pull of society and western values distracted me from religion. It is not 'fashionable' among young people to be religious. Religion? that's for old people, those who are about to die. My faith weakened until it was something which occupied little of my time and few of my thoughts.

My faith was most shaken when I worked as a porter at Great Ormond Street Hospital for sick children. My acquaintance with one girl in particular is a tiny fragmentation within my catalogue of memories. She was a beautiful child of fourteen who had not developed since she was struck by cancer when just nine. I was taking her to a scanner with her parents, delightful people with a gorgeous, soft sense of humour. They bore her suffering better than I thought humanly possible. As I returned the partially blind, silent motionless daughter back to her bed, unknowingly, I allowed her head to slip. She made no movement which I could fathom but her parents quickly sensed her pain and at once urged me to support her head. I was so angry with my clumsiness and with this poor child's suffering that my faith was greatly shaken. I muttered my apologies devastated by the thought that I had hurt her. In this moment of distress, this half-blind dying child

held my finger in her hand, squeezed it and smiled.

Now, when I look back on this moment which made me angry with Allah and consequently tested my faith, I am ashamed at my arrogance and stupidity. This child accepted her suffering and was more concerned in easing my distress than worry about herself. My faith failed this test.....

I turned away from God and dedicated myself to 'good causes' socialism and other non-spiritual distractions. I never ceased believing in God but my belief was weak. I would agree with the existence of God in my mind but could find no relevance for Him in my daily life.

But Allah is full of mercy and forgiveness. After years of wandering, God blessed me with my first copy of the Qur'an. It was given to me by a Pakistani community leader, Mr. I. Siddiqi. We had met to discuss ways of involving the local community with the school where I had begun teaching. Towards the end of the meeting, Mr. Siddiqi gave me a copy of the Qur'an and encouraged me to read it. He promised me that by the time I finished it, I would have become a Muslim. I wanted to burst out laughing.

The whole of my upbringing and conditioning had made me hate Islam. Like many people in the west, I was taken in by the anti-Islamic propaganda. I had never read the Qur'an, nor studied the religion, yet I felt fully justified in condemning it. Despite these feelings I was moved by Mr. Siddiqi's sincerity and I promised I would read it. I thank Allah that I kept this promise.....

My professional life brought me into daily contact with practising Muslim brothers and sisters. I gained promotion and took on a job where I had to work in schools in combating racism. I often came up against racism expressed against Islam. Frequently people's hatred and fears were expressed against aspects of the Islamic religion. To do my job more effectively I began to study the Qur'an. Encouraged by my co-workers I read widely. The ideas and beauty that I came across were a real revelation. It was as if the questions and doubts of the previous years were being blown away. Even in translation I could appreciate the beauty of the Qur'anic message of Creation. The divine law and purpose of the Universe became increasingly clear.

It was at this point that I went on a trip to Pakistan in 1988, with a small group of teachers. It proved to be one of several turning points. The culture shock was as great as I had expected but the weight of belief and faith which I met was unexpected. Virtually the first man I met in Pakistan was a Pathan, who asked me if I needed help. I was wary expecting to be 'ripped off'. Undeterred he obtained a taxi; took me to my destination; paid for the taxi while I changed some money and then refused any kind of 'tip' other than the 7 rupees taxi fare. He explained modestly that as a Muslim it was his duty to help and that his reward was with Allah. He walked away leaving me clutching my money and ashamed at having judged him by western standards.

I am not naive enough to say that this was the level of faith which I found throughout Pakistan; far from it. I met many people who wanted to make something from me. I was offered alcohol, drugs were available etc. But I did meet practising Muslims who sought to help because it was their Islamic duty. They put themselves out and embarrassed my entire party by their unselfishness and hospitality. May Allah reward their kindness.

So many experiences flood my mind - the visit to Faisal Mosque; the playing fields of Lawrence College, Muree; the beauty of Muzafabad. But one incident shook me more than any other. It must have been about Asr time. It was a beautiful afternoon, clear, sunny with beautiful breathtaking scenery. As we were escorted up to see an old Mogul fort, I noticed a young man preparing himself for prayer. With purpose he strode to the prayer place and called the Adhan. I looked around and was astonished to see the passers by doing exactly that - passing by. There was just one other who came to pray, a companion of the young man. They said their prayers and I was transfixed. I kept glancing across to them. Nothing deterred them. There was something in their prostration. It did not matter to them that their fellow Muslims were ignoring the Adhan; they were engrossed in their prayer and worship of Allah.

Inwardly I wanted to run. I wanted to hide. I did not want to face the consequences of my thoughts. Observing these brothers and realising the meaning of Imaan, shook me rigid. Intellectually I had always believed in God but it was an easy faith. It was not one which impinged on my daily life; it was not a faith which permeated my every action. Far from it. My faith was like an item of clothing which I could put on when I felt like it. In short it was not real faith but a convenient

intellectual answer carrying no weight.

Throughout my path to Islam, it has been such individual actions and events which has spurred me on. After watching those two brothers submit before Allah, I was a different man. Their act of submission had shamed me. A doubt had been planted in my mind, a seed had been sown. I could no longer play with religion. I knew that one day, Insha-Allah, I would have to commit myself.

On my return to England I continued my move towards Islam. I discussed with Muslim friends and began to think of the practical consequences of my embracing Islam. By this time I was the proud father of a delightful little girl. As I held her in my arms I was torn in two opposing directions. On the one hand I wanted to embrace Islam. I knew that I could not do both. My family would never accept my following Islam. The dilemma stifled me and held me in check. I could not give up my attraction for Islam; I felt there was an inevitability of my conversion. I was, however, reluctant to proceed beyond private study.

Some two years later I was given a further jolt which moved me relentlessly towards Islam. I was contacted by teaching staff at Madina-Tul-Uloom-Al-Islamiya (then the girls and now the boys Islamic college in the Midlands) and asked for advice concerning an update on H.M.I school inspections. I felt a duty to go. I did not know what to expect but the experience dispelled deep prejudices which I had not even been aware of.

On my arrival I was met by three sisters, whom were wearing the veil. I was completely thrown and expecting to have real problems of communication. Would they speak English? Despite years of study, I was still full of ridiculous preconceptions concerning the wearing of the veil. To my western way of thinking, they were going to be somehow alien. I was shocked when I discovered that they were 'normal'! The only thing which distinguished them from most other people was their total love and devotion to Allah. The few hours I spent with them seemed to fly by in minutes. Our discussions were centred around education but the whole context was permeated with Islam. I shall never forget that day. Their humour, their devotion, their strength of faith left me somewhat shell shocked but more determined to continue the process of spiritual recovery.

My love for Allah grew steadily and just when I needed a new teacher I met

brother 'Ferman Elaahi'. Our work threw us together and before long we were engaged in deep discussions on the meaning of Islam. Brother Ferman led by example. His devotion to Islam helped me further along the path. He never imposed his beliefs upon me in an attempt to convince me, he just answered my questions with honesty and encouraged my spiritual development. We went to Birmingham, Central Mosque together and met with other brothers who are similarly devoted to Allah.

It was about this time that I had to face the death of a parent again. When my father had died in 1984, just as with that poor child at Great Ormond Street, I was consumed with anger. I thought it was anger at the injustice of death: in fact it was anger at myself. I had allowed my father to die without strengthening our relationship, reinforcing how much I respected him. Now as a Muslim I can see the truth of the Qur'an and the teaching of respect for one's parents. At least when my mother died, as I held her hand, in September 1990, I came away with different feelings. She totally accepted her fate and helped me accept the inevitability of death without anger. My sorrow was not less profound, but my faith had grown.

***My heart was full of just one thought; La ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasulullah Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam.***

I had not intended saying Shahaadah (recitation and acknowledgement of the core fundamental of Islam) when I went down to Birmingham to see my friend Ferman. I was still afraid of the consequences but I was overtaken by events. We met at the Central Mosque as arranged and sat down in some privacy downstairs. As always, the Mosque was having a deep effect on me and as I talked with Ferman my heart began to burst. I could not deny my faith any longer. It was as if all the lessons which Allah had allowed me to learn were coming to a climax. No more logical niceties; no more doubts; no more hiding from what I knew to be true. The floodwater of my soul was breaking the dam of my previous way of life. I could not hold back from sharing all my experiences with Ferman and the inevitable conclusion -

***La ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasulullah Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam.***

At that precise moment the Adhan came over the loudspeaker and Ferman gently suggested, "I think you should make Shaahadah now." No sooner had he said these words that we were up and in no time at all I was part of the congregation. I

did not know much of the prayers but I followed the movements with perseverance. For the first time in my life I prostrated myself in sajdah with my new found brothers. A weight was lifted from my shoulders as I bowed in submission to Allah. There is no action more blessed and none so complete.

Once the prayers were over, the huge crowd dispersed and we were able to find an Imam. The simplicity of the ceremony was perfect; no pomp and circumstance.

As we walked back to the car, I felt a warm glow. This was overtaken by surprise at the genuine joy that my embracing Islam had brought to the few brothers still in the Mosque. They hugged me with a warmth that made me feel humble. As I drove home I knew there would be grave consequences and within a week these had happened. I lost my family when I had to move out from my home.

My conversion is not the end of my story. Each day I seem blessed with further experiences, and still more evidence of Allah's love. I am now embarked on a new life and I have gained one fundamental freedom- the freedom to submit to the will of Allah. It is this act of submission at each prayer time which gives me the greatest joy. As I bow down before my creator I am filled with thanks that I have been allowed the gift of Islam.

So many brothers and sisters have helped me often without realising it. We can never know the full effect of our actions. Certain things are tangible but so much is known only to Allah. The two young men in Pakistan will never know how they affected my life. Yet their action and the strength of their Imaan, has been like a beacon driving me forward into the Noor of belief. The contrast between their submission to Allah Ta'aalaa and the oblivious way in which they were ignored by so many passers-by, will stay with me forever.

The Imaan which I see in others confirms and strengthens my own. The web of belief is added daily by the actions and deeds of brothers and sisters all around me. But this web is a kindly web. It does not trap or ensnare- quite the opposite. It is the web of experience which has given me the freedom to submit to the will of Allah.

*May He bless and reward all those who have helped me to realize the beauty of this submission. Ameen.*

## caution

The visibility that day brings, glistening water from a tap, the darkness harboured by night, inevitability of sleep are all valuables in their own right, each forever attained, abundantly and often with little regard, as all too often we take such bounties for granted. Religion too has not been able to escape this vicious circle that man has created.

'A Question of Faith' unravels many thought provocative aspects for all Muslims by birth. Due to our negligence of faith the tables have turned, the situation in hand is such that the 'New Muslims' (Revert Muslims) could very well teach us a lesson or two. The article is undoubtedly a heart warming portrayal of a new Muslim but also a reviver of faith for all those who have faltered in their practises. Many a person could shrug this article off by commenting that it is merely a sensitive piece of writing which will obviously win the hearts of many people due to its use of consciously elaborated incidents. This however, would only be classed as denial of the blatant and self deceit.

If we stop to picture a typical courtroom, there we shall find a solicitor for the defence cross-examining, he who stands in the dock. The cross-examination then turns into a judgement. Whilst the solicitor cross-examines, the jury cross-examines too. Both parties reach their own conclusions, both perceive differently. Similarly, we as 'born Muslims' are quick to cross-examine a new Muslim however the new Muslim is also deeply indulged in the analysis of the Muslim brethren around him. Thus, the possibility of the presence of he who is eager to learn, eager to gain nearness of the Almighty should never be overlooked.

Whilst the almighty is the Provider of Imaan, as believers the part we play is a necessary counterpart, and sometimes as in Mohammad Yusuf's case 'a beacon' that helps to draw the seeker of Imaan forward.

Hence, our very lives, the minor normalities, our mannerisms, our capacity to refrain from contempt, withhold patience, openly forgive, shower sincerity and our outer and inner strengths should prove to be a direct portrayal of a Muslim; a true God fearing Muslim.

Muhammad Yusuf reflects upon a turning point which takes place in Pakistan whereby two men are praying alone, diligently in bliss whilst all others ignore the call of prayer. For Muhammad Yusuf this act of submission was a major realization, for a born Muslim it is a reflection of what maybe classed as 'normality'. Having been to Pakistan on a number of occasions the scenario has always left me feeling a combination of disgust, pity and grief. The element of abusing readily attainable valuables, is once again prominent in the negligence of the 'Azaan' for the call of prayer is also taken for granted. For you and I (and all those living in a non- Islamic country) such a blessing as the 'Azaan' would be much welcomed.

The question is how long would it be until we too would begin to ignorantly man-handle the 'Azaan' choosing to submit unto the Almighty when one can 'afford' to and neglecting submission on the more 'hectic' of days?

*Is it not time that we revive our Imaan?*

*For He who provides can surely deprive.*

